

AN

ESSAY

ON

INSANITY,

OR

MENTAL ABERRATION.

BY EDWARD SUTLEFFE,

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“ Disorders of intellect are the heaviest of human afflictions, and happen much more often than superficial observers will easily believe.” JOHNSON.

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PREFACE.

AN eminent surgeon, Mr. A., has long since published an approved axiom, viz. "That a grain of fact is more valuable than a pound of reasoning." In pursuance of this principle I have presumed to furnish some results of my observation, selecting a small specimen of cases which are reserved prospectively for a third volume, *feeling confident* that, during the experience of thirty years, full justice has not been rendered to such subjects.

In cases of idiopathic mania, where no organic derangement exists, I rely exclusively upon the sedative powers of Glecoma. Paraphrosyne, or simple nervous irritation alone, in every grade, justifies my expectation of its curative powers.

When the arterial system is full and bounding, depletory measures are necessarily employed as securing a prefatory position for the calming energies of the valuable herb ; experience increasingly convinces me of its real efficacy under such circumstances, and is not a delusion, as some affirm.

In order to compound the extract for a suitable division into pills, to prevent adhesion we are in the habit of blending pulv. valerian. as an appropriate adjunct in nervous affections.

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As maniacal cases are multiplying upon us with unusual frequency, from causes over which we have no control, it has been suggested, from a quarter which I cannot resist, whether it would not be right and seasonable to contribute my quota towards the obtaining of more extended benefit.

It being generally understood that mental irritation precludes the possibility of sleep, in proportion to the degree of eclipse under which the subject labours, hence the reference to our narcotics of a remote or recent origin; but the discount is so large as to call in question their real value.

The Glecoma (from the experience of thirty years,) I affirm to be a counter-irritant; under its use the bowels are not rendered torpid; cerebral uneasiness is removed, and sleep, refreshing and

dreamless, is generally secured. The expressed juice of the ever-green herb, recently bruised, is swallowed at bedtime, \mathfrak{z} iss. which usually operates on the first dose: should it fail on the two first nights of securing rest, my prognosis is unfavourable, judging that cerebral mischief operates, excluding effectually the tranquillising effects of the despised herb.

The trial is simple, and should the medical world continue sceptical, it would be wished that others would put it to the test, and give the world the result.

Christians of every denomination aspire, "by patient continuance in well-doing," to leave the world better than they found it.

MANIA CURED WITH GLECOMA.

Mr. E., South Finsbury, whom I was called to see, laboured under decided and established mania, many years ago: several measures had been resorted to, but unsuccessfully. I had witnessed the inertness of the ground-ivy in some instances, and fearing lest this should be an additional case, I prescribed the juice of the despised herb with ambiguous feeling; but knowing none superior in efficacy, it was given. The tranquillising effects

were quickly recognised, and in three weeks I took leave, finding him competent to superintend his concerns as usual; and I believe he has suffered no relapse to the present day.

HIGHLY NERVOUS IRRITATION.

A professional character, formerly indulging in the excitements of the military circle, (a bad school for morals and mental culture,) became a victim to muscular lassitude and nervous irritation of a very peculiar order. He had passed through all the routine of restoratives which medical science could devise, leaving him, however, a sufferer in the head, obliging him to be a "keeper at home." Accident put him in possession of a volume of "Medical Cases;" leisure and opportunity enabled him to peruse the contents; the author was sent for, who relied upon the efficacy of Glecoma, in the extract and juice; there was superadded a domestic shower-bath. The beneficial effects of the ground-ivy were quickly recognised; and in six weeks he was more "himself again," than he had been during the long period of four preceding years.

I found this gentleman labouring under a diseased infatuation, that if he dared to venture out of his house he should not return home alive. No reasoning was available. After taking the ground-

ivy for two weeks, he observed, "I wish I had known you before; I never received such sensible improvement in my head and general feelings under any medicine till now." He could venture out without fear, first in a coach, then on foot, with his usual agility. The recovery appears so complete, as to leave no vestige even of common eccentricity.

MANIA RELIEVED WITH GLECOMA.

MR. —, in an easterly direction, had been pronounced by two practitioners in succession to be on the verge of mania. The inmates of the patient were apprehensive of the same by eccentricities of an uncommon order. He was placed under the care of Dr. — for two months, whose prescriptions produced a soreness of the mouth, and loosening of the teeth; but ptyalism not being the cure for mania, and obtaining no relief, he withdrew, and took the juice of Glecoma under my suggestion. His nights, which had hitherto been sleepless, or perturbed by unrefreshing dreams, became calm and composed under the first dose.

This case, at the commencement, promised a favourable issue under the tranquillising effects of

Glecoma; but discontinuing its use for ten or twelve days, at the request of the patient, who considered himself convalescent, furor and fever supervened, and carried him off very unexpectedly.

Ptyalism raised in the ordinary way is occasionally productive of insanity; and, however valuable its aid is in securing a salutary crisis in fever, it is the last resource I should employ for the relief of a maniacal subject.

VICARIOUS ERUPTIONS.

Spontaneous eruptions, under high excitement, (which have been a precursor to ratiocination), have led to the adoption of cutaneous pustules, excited on distant parts from the seat of disease; and sometimes with the most decided success.

Coldness in the lower extremities exhibits proof of the want of balance in the system.

I had another gentleman also under my care a few years ago, whose diseased conceit was, that he should not survive if he passed over London Bridge, and actually stepped into a boat, whenever he had occasion to cross, and thus landed on the other side. He also had sought relief from several practitioners (continental as well as metropolitan), but without the least relief: he took the ground-

ivy, which composed his nervous system, and perfectly removed his eclipse; and, as far as I know, he has had no return since.

I had also an elderly gentleman placed under my care, whose diseased idea was, that he was not a material body, but purely spirit. Reasoning with such a patient was out of the question; all my resources laid in rest, kind treatment, and the ground-ivy. This case also I had the pleasure of seeing restored to right reason and his counting-house. I never heard that he had ever relapsed.

A few years ago I had a voluptuous character under my care, whose habits apparently had subjected him to violent paroxysms of mania occasionally, which in process of time became permanent. At the expiration of a few weeks of disturbed reason, I was sent for. He had always been a turbulent man, but was now outrageous; he had been abusing every inmate and visitor, and was incessantly talking, both night and day. I gave, of course, a wine-glass full of the juice of Glecoma. This dose procured six hours composed and refreshing sleep. On the following day he was calm, but with ferrety eyes. His recovery was quick, but soon recurring to his old intemperate habits, contracted maniacal paroxysms again. I refused taking charge of him under such circumstances; the parties were not kept ignorant of the soothing qualities of the ground-ivy, and his death partook, in a sense, rather of the suicidal than an ordinary character.

CASES IN WHICH THE GLECOMA HAS FAILED.

Various instances have occurred where no permanent good has resulted from the exhibition of the ground-ivy. Tranquillising sleep has succeeded the use of the green draught for a while, and afterwards ceased altogether, even under its continuance. In some, on every recurrence of the mysterious malady, good has been effected by an obvious and generally acknowledged diminution of the distressing symptoms, together with a consciousness of having needlessly violated the laws of relative propriety, and a suitable expression of the same.

Post mortem examinations have evinced such high arterial excitement and universal vascular turgescence, as to be utterly incompatible with regular ratiocination. In a few, a morbid structure of the blood-vessels has sufficiently explained the cause of failure; but I apprehend (as wiser heads have acknowledged), that the scalpel of the most accurate anatomist will usually not detect the latent mischief, of the most insidious character, giving rise to the evil.

EFFICACY OF EXTRACT. GLECOMÆ.

Mr. B—— called, complaining of dreaming, sleepless, and harassing nights. He had passed through a vicissitude of painful occurrences, involving principally the loss of a partner for life, but who was removed from him by “ pining sickness.” “ Death was gain ” to her, but loss to the bereaved widower. There were no characteristic marks of cerebral affection as far as the vultus might denote, but having confidence in no other remedy than the Glecoma pills (which are always in readiness), I supplied him with a few, directing one to be taken at bed-time only, observing no evacuating effect would follow their use; whence some have considered them positively inert. After a few days he called to thank me for the pills; he could now sleep, and was refreshed thereby. I know of no medicine which would have operated so speedily, pleasantly, and permanently as the ground-ivy.

I think it not improbable that this case, had it been neglected or mal-treated, might have terminated in melancholic madness.

The venerable and independent Cline was accustomed to furnish his pupils, in the years 1790–3 inclusive, with the observations (for proving the truth of which he had abundant opportunities at the

old Bethlehem) that, in cases of melancholia, the brain exhibited a mollient character more than was natural, and *vice versâ*, in furious mania the general presentation was of an unusual firm texture. Perhaps beyond this information, it may be said, "Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further."

GOOD EFFECTS OF GLECOMA.

A few years ago, I was sent for to visit a young lady, who had been disappointed on an important subject, whose restless nights and wearisome days excited no small share of alarm as to the probable issue in the minds of the relatives. Extract. Glecomæ constituted my principal remedial resource. Its tranquillising effects became immediately operative; the distressed subject could now enjoy refreshing sleep and cheerful days, rising superior to the fickleness of any lord of the creation. The impression, as often as it was desired, was found to be efficacious, and never lost its calming effects. To the present day, by choice rather than by necessity, she refers to it as an antidote to every fear, real or imaginary; and adds, that she has never been disappointed.

I could refer to many instances, where the soothing influence of the Glecoma is as certain and uniform in its operation as tart. antimon. is upon the stomach, or jalap upon the bowels.

THE END.

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